



An Agenda for Change.  
**A Year of Accomplishments.**

**Convene. Analyze. Track.  
Hold Accountable.  
The Kennedy Forum's Agenda.**



For nearly two years, The Kennedy Forum has been advancing an ambitious agenda to transform the way we view and treat mental health and addiction. We are pursuing this much-needed change through payer accountability, provider accountability, integration and coordination, technology, and brain fitness and health. This landscape—challenging, but full of opportunity—has been the focal point of our efforts, with many wins along the way.

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**Our first-ever State of the Union in Mental Health and Addiction, held in Feb. 2015, set the standard for what policymakers, the media, advocates, and others should understand about what's at stake in mental health today, and where we need to go to get the real change we need.**

**We announced a groundbreaking new partnership with the Satcher Health Leadership Initiative at the Morehouse School of Medicine. Together, we will highlight, expand, and promote best practices in mental health and addiction treatment and policy at the federal, state, and local level.**

**In partnership with the Scattergood Foundation and the Treatment Research Institute, we have launched a first-of-its-kind tool, ParityTrack that will aggregate and promote parity implementation activities, legislation, & regulation on the state level.**

**With the Parity Implementation Coalition, we are updating a resource guide for consumers and advocates to help them understand the Parity law and to give them the tools they need to protect their rights and get the care they need.**

**Over the last 12 months, the Forum has convened dozens of experts from across sectors to discuss the greatest challenges and the most promising solutions in behavioral health practice, service delivery, and policy. From these valuable dialogues, we are issuing a series of white papers and issue briefs beginning this summer.**

*"We must steer this ship away from the iceberg, not simply ask for more lifeboats. When it comes to mental health, our efforts as a nation must be comprehensive, and not a series of quick, temporary fixes."*

**— PATRICK J. KENNEDY**

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In short, our efforts are changing the national dialogue on mental health and addiction, and our work is having an impact.

Change doesn't happen without hard work from leaders in every sector and without listening and learning from the diverse voices of the mental health community, from patients and families to providers. Our mission is to convene and drive change — analyzing approaches, amplifying what works, and holding the system accountable for the progress we all seek and that is long overdue.

**For those who have joined us over these past two years, thank you. For those who want to be part of this next wave – we welcome you to share in our mission.**

## Building the Foundation for Change one Brick at a Time

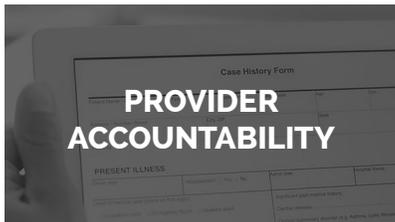


Our agenda can be best characterized as pillars: foundational elements that support our vision for systemic change in behavioral health and addiction treatment and outcomes. It goes deeper than words on a page – these pillars represent the most meaningful and actionable issues to drive change. Taken separately, they are the basis for policy interventions, funding, advocacy campaigns, or strategic communications. As a whole, they set the stage for what's needed to move the conversation about mental health and addiction in America in a new direction.



### Ensuring Access to Care

The Kennedy Forum wants to ensure the full implementation and enforcement of the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008 (MHPAEA or Parity Act). Fulfilling the promise of the Parity Act will depend in large part on health insurance plans (payers) complying with the letter and spirit of the law. The Kennedy Forum is working to bring greater clarity and guidance to the Parity law, promote transparency and accountability, and educate consumers about their rights.



### Demanding Better Quality and Outcomes

Behavioral health providers severely lack the resources and tools to measure outcomes and service effectiveness. Working with a range of stakeholders and experts in the field, The Kennedy Forum is identifying and advancing standardized clinical practices and evidence-based measurement tools that will improve patient care and outcomes.



### Increasing Access, Lowering Costs, & Delivering Better Outcomes Through Coordination

People living with mental illnesses and addiction often live shorter and sicker lives because of untreated and preventable chronic illnesses. By promoting innovative care models and better coordination of services, The Kennedy Forum is working to ensure that patients have access to the care they need.



### Driving Collaboration To Create Better Results

Technology offers promising solutions for improving patient care and outcomes in behavioral health. The Kennedy Forum wants to seize these opportunities and leverage technology to advance care coordination, expand workforce capacity, and accelerate treatment.



### Developing New Ways to Provide Earlier Interventions

There is a clear gap in the tracking and translating of emerging scientific findings for the improvement of brain health. The Kennedy Forum is committed to promoting faster translation of neuroscience research findings into preventative and treatment interventions that will improve the lives of individuals living with mental illness and addiction.

## The Kennedy Forum Pillars in Action



Over the last 12 months, The Kennedy Forum has convened top experts in the fields of mental health policy, service delivery, advocacy, addiction treatment, and government to discuss, debate, and devise approaches that will have a real, lasting impact on the availability and quality of mental health and substance use care. These meetings, best characterized as focus groups, were developed with the future of mental health in mind, while taking a page from the successes of the past.

We started with The Kennedy Forum's pillars, and asked these experts to help expand our collective thinking, bring more and new ideas to the table, and help us form the recommendations that can be leveraged at all levels of government and across sectors to drive real change.

The following white papers will be released in the coming months:

- Fixing Mental Health Care in America: A National Call for Integrating & Coordinating Specialty Behavioral Health Care into the Medical System
- Fixing Mental Health Care in America: A National Call for Measurement Based Care in Behavioral Health and Primary Care

## Accountability in Action: The State of the Union in Mental Health and Addiction



In February 2015, The Kennedy Forum and the Satcher Health Leadership Initiative announced a groundbreaking new partnership focused on highlighting, expanding, and promoting best practices in mental health and addiction treatment and policy. This partnership was announced as part of our first annual State of the Union in Mental Health and Addiction, which will become a yearly barometer on what is working – and not working – when it comes to mental health and addiction in America.

As part of this year's effort, The Kennedy Forum commissioned public opinion research to set a baseline on how Americans feel mental health is treated in this country. Of those surveyed this winter, **71% felt that the system needs "significant" or "radical" changes. Seventy-four percent feel that physical health is "treated with more importance" in the healthcare system.** Respondents also pointed to the need for greater research into the prevention and treatment of mental health conditions, as well as increasing quality and access of care.

Our 2016 State of the Union in Mental Health and Addiction is set for mid-February, and details will be available later this summer.

"We stand on the doorstep to make momentous progress in advancing the cause of this new civil rights struggle started by the work of President Kennedy over 50 years ago."

— PATRICK J. KENNEDY